

The House with Chicken Legs

PERFECT FOR: ages 9+, studying folktales;
creating fairytales; mastering the art of personification;
and PSHE links to friendship.

KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading comprehension; Creative Writing; Writing in Role

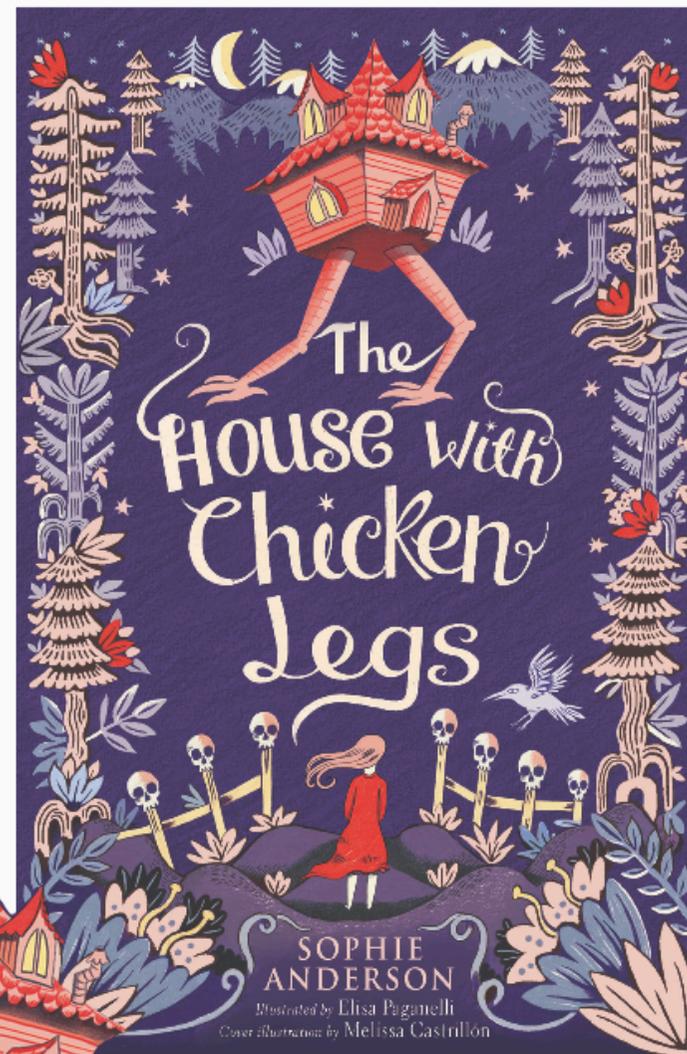
Design Technology & Art

Drama, Speaking and Listening

Science: Earth and Space; Materials and Changing States

Geography

PSHE & Citizenship



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THE HOUSE WITH CHICKEN LEGS

WEEK 1 (PAGES 1–60): LIVING IN THIS YAGA HOUSE



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension - Infer characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justify inferences with evidence.</p> <p>Drama, Speaking and Listening - Interpret text in order to perform a story orally, using musical instruments and props to convey meaning.</p> <p>Writing in Role - Empathise with a character by writing a letter in role.</p> <p>Design Technology & Art - Design a Yaga House using descriptions from the story as inspiration.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What can you <u>infer</u> about the narrator in the Prologue? How old might he/she be? How does he/she feel? (pages 7–10) 2. Who is Baba? What is her <u>relationship</u> to the narrator? What does she do? (pages 7–10) 3. On page 12, Marinka tells Jack that she wishes she could 'fly down there'. What does she mean? Why is the idea of 'freedom' important to Marinka? 4. What is Marinka's destiny? How does she feel about it? (page 12) 5. How does Marinka describe the 'duty' of the 'Yaga'? (page 14) 6. What do you learn about Marinka's parents from Baba's story? How did Marinka's mother break 'the Yaga rules'? (pages 21–24) 7. What does Benjamin teach Marinka about 'loneliness' on page 36? What do the two characters have in common? (pages 35–36) 8. How does the author create the sense that the house is watching Marinka? (pages 38–40) 9. How has the house changed for Marinka? (page 43) 10. Marinka's emotions change very suddenly on page 57. Why is this? What emotions does she feel? Do you empathise with her? (pages 57–60) 	<p>Design your own unique Yaga House. What would it look like? What special features would it have, and where would it take you? You can either draw your house or write a descriptive piece, just make sure it comes to life!</p> <p>Baba Yaga was one of the common stories of the Russian oral tradition. In groups, carry out some research into the story of Baba Yaga according to this tradition. Can you then work together to retell the story and perform it to the class – using accompanying musical instruments and props?</p> <p>Write a letter in role as Marinka at the end of page 60; it should be addressed to Benjamin and describe her feelings after the house has decided to take her away from him. What would she say? How would she explain her disappearance and the disappearance of Benjamin's lamb?</p>



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WEEK 2 (PAGES 61–120): GUIDING THROUGH THE GATE



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse an author's writing style and identify different techniques and effective vocabulary used. - Use an author's writing in order to model a new piece of writing in the same style. - Write a description of a setting mentioned in the book. <p>Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a list of characteristics and physical features for different settings mentioned in the book. <p>PSHE & Citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define the term 'Friendship'. - Give examples of good and bad behaviour in friendships. - Create a 'Friendship Rulebook'. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the new setting on page 61 reflect how Marinka is feeling? 2. What are Marinka's <u>motivations</u> for keeping Nina in the house and not letting her pass through The Gate? Do you think she is being fair to Nina? (pages 61–82) 3. Is the 'ant lion trap' a <u>metaphor</u>? For what? (pages 79–81) 4. What are Marinka's <u>conflicting</u> emotions when she ignores Baba's request to say the death journey words? (page 91) 5. What happens when Marinka listens to Serina's story on pages 98–99? Why might this be important? 6. How does the author, Sophie Anderson, create a sense of <u>mystery</u> beyond The Gate? (pages 99–101) 7. Why does Marinka feel ashamed of herself? Do you think she is right to feel this way? (pages 104–105) 8. How does the author give Jack a personality, even though he is an animal? How can you <u>infer</u> his emotions from the descriptions of him? (page 106) 9. What is Marinka's relationship with Baba? Do you think it is a good relationship? How does Marinka feel when she refuses her Grandmother's offer to swim and sunbathe at the beach? Why? (pages 110–112) 10. Marinka often talks about 'the ache' in her chest. What do you think this ache is? (page 113) 	<p>Ask pupils to create their own settings for The Chicken House using Sophie Anderson's descriptive passages on pages 108–109 as inspiration. They should choose one of the scenes mentioned – e.g. the desert, steep grey mountains, the lush green valley, the jungle, or the long narrow beach.</p> <p>In Geography, write a list of characteristics and physical features for each of the settings above. What sort of climate, wildlife and ecosystems would you expect to find in each?</p> <p>Friendship is one of the most important themes in <i>The House With Chicken Legs</i> – but what is it? Define the term by creating two columns: 'Examples of a Good Friend' and 'Examples of a Bad Friend'. Make a list of situations or qualities in each column, discussing ideas with the class. Finally, write a 'Friendship Rulebook' – listing the rules of a good friendship.</p>



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WEEK 3 (PAGES 121–170): STEPPING INTO THE GATE

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw inferences such as inferring characters' personalities and thoughts from objects belonging to them, and justifying inferences with evidence. - Predict events in the book based on understanding of the text. <p>Creative Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue in the style of the author by writing a new paragraph in the story. <p>Design Technology & Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand and define the term 'identity'. - Create a time capsule that represents the identity of a person. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why does Marinka think she is fading? What other thoughts 'zoom through' her mind? (pages 121–122) 2. What does Baba reveal to Marinka on pages 127–132? List three things. How do they make Marinka feel? How does it make you, the reader, feel? 3. Why can't Marinka venture too far away from the house? (page 128) 4. How does the author add another <u>twist</u> to the <u>plot</u> on page 136? What is the effect of this? 5. 'The life I've had is better than no life at all.' What does Marinka mean when she says this on page 141? Do you agree with her? 6. Do you agree with Baba's idea that there is no difference between 'nurturing the living' and 'nurturing the dead'? What does the word 'nurturing' mean? (page 141) 7. How does the house stop Marinka from stepping through The Gate on pages 149–150? 8. What happens when Marinka blows out the candles on page 151? Why do you think this is happening? 9. Why do Marinka's 'eyes widen' as she reads the story given to her by the Old Yaga? (page 163) 10. Marinka is adamant that her Grandmother will return when she speaks to the Old Yaga, but how can you tell that she is really feeling unsure? (page 166) 	<p>On page 142, Marinka smells Baba's headscarf, decorated with 'skulls and flowers', and smelling of 'lavender water, bread dough, <i>borsch</i> and <i>kvass</i>.' What does this description of Baba's headscarf tell the reader about her personality? Pick an object that reminds you of a family member or a close friend – what does it look like and smell like? How does it remind you of the person?</p> <p>The author includes a cliffhanger on page 148 when Marinka steps 'calmly into The Gate'. What do you think she can see here? Without reading the next chapter, write the next paragraph of the story.</p> <p>When the dead gather in the house, they bring with them special memories of their lives. What are your special memories? Using an empty plastic bottle or box, create a time capsule including photographs and objects that represent your identity. Present it to your partner or the whole class.</p>

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WEEK 4 (PAGES 171–223): TOPSY-TURVY



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Earth and Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe the planets and stars relative to Earth in our solar system. - Research the Milky Way galaxy, referring to scientific facts and images. - Match images of the Milky Way galaxy to descriptive paragraphs or imagery in the story. <p>Design Technology & Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw a portrait of the characters Marinka and Jack to show the relationship between the two. <p>Writing in Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a character's feelings from clues in the text. - Empathise with a particular character from the story by writing a monologue in role. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marinka has a guilty conscience throughout the story, <i>The House With Chicken Legs</i>. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? (pages 172, 183) 2. How does Salma make Marinka feel good on pages 177–182? How does the author also create a sense of <u>foreboding</u> here? 3. Do you get the sense that Marinka is behaving badly towards her friends Jack, Benji, and the house? Why? (pages 184–185) 4. How does Marinka's relationship with the house deteriorate on pages 196–197? What does she do to it? Why? 5. Marinka doesn't feel comfortable with the girls at the Riad. Why? How can you tell? (pages 201–207) 6. How does Marinka's experience with the girls change her ideas about the living? (page 209) 7. How does the author make you empathise with the house on pages 210–211? 8. Why does Marinka feel she 'has been just as mean as the girls'? (page 213) 9. How is Marinka different to other Yaga? What does this mean for her? (pages 218–219) 10. What is a 'Ceremony of Bonding'? What are Marinka's real motivations for wanting to have one? (page 219) 	<p>On pages 192–195, the Old Yaga speaks to Marinka about the Milky Way. Stars and outer space are very prominent in the story. How? Carry out some research into the Milky Way galaxy. What do scientists know about it? What does it look like? Can you match any images of the Milky Way to any descriptions in the book?</p> <p>Read the description of Jack the jackdaw on page 203. How does Marinka feel about him? Draw a portrait of Marinka and Jack using this description, thinking about how you might portray their special relationship. Use bold colours and materials in the classroom to make the portrait spring to life.</p> <p>Using pages 210–211, write a <u>monologue</u> in role as the house, explaining how you feel. Perform your monologue in front of the class, using props to help you convey meaning. How might you use body language, voice, volume and tone to show the house's disappointment here?</p>



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WEEK 5 (PAGES 224–275): A THUNDER OF YAGA



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare and contrast themes and ideas in two different texts. - Identify how the author uses another text in order to change or challenge it. <p>Materials and Changing States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Record information from the text in the form of a table. - Carry out research into chemical reactions described in the text. <p>Writing in Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify how the author uses imagery and personification to describe fire. - Reimagine a chapter from the perspective of the fire, writing a diary entry in role. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you think Marinka is persuaded to go with Salma to the market? (pages 226–229) 2. Marinka snaps at the girls on pages 232–233. Why? Do you think she is right to do so? 3. Why do you think Lamya calls Marinka an ‘ugly witch-child’? What makes her believe that Marinka is a witch? (page 232) 4. What lesson does the Old Yaga teach Marinka about <u>friendship</u> on page 236? 5. What reason does the Old Yaga give for why she speaks to the living? (page 240) 6. Marinka has another <u>motive</u> for holding the Ceremony of Bonding. What is it? How does the author leave clues that this might be a dangerous thing to do? (pages 251–257) 7. How does the author raise <u>tension</u> in this part of the book? Pick out the different <u>techniques</u> and <u>effective vocabulary</u> that you can see. (pages 259–261) 8. Why is the house angry with Marinka after she tries to run through The Gate? (page 267) 9. What important choice does Marinka make when the house is on fire? Why does she make this choice? (page 273) 10. How do Marinka and the house begin to heal their relationship on pages 274–275? 	<p>Why do the girls consider the Old Yaga and Marinka to be like witches? Refer back to your research on the Russian Folktale from Week 1. How was Baba Yaga portrayed in this folktale? Make a list of witch-like qualities that she possessed, and then consider how the author, Sophie Anderson, changes or challenges this original portrayal of Baba Yaga.</p> <p>When the Old Yaga is making fireworks, she explains that colours are created when different powders are burned. Referring to page 239, create a table of colours and their matching powders. Then carry out some scientific research to see if the theory is true. What chemical reactions would take place?</p> <p>The imagery of ‘fire’ is very important in this section. Imagine that you have been asked to <u>personify</u> fire. How would it speak and act? Write a diary entry in role as the fire as it consumes the house (pages 270–275).</p>



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WEEK 6 (PAGES 276–337): THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IN THE TINY PUDDLE



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retrieve information about the plot from a section of text. - Summarise the entire plot of the story, identifying the key points of action. - Categorise points of action into a Plot Diagram, made up of 'Beginning', 'Middle' and 'End'. <p>Creating Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note and develop initial ideas for a fairy tale, drawing on reading. - Use a Plot Diagram to plan the structure of a story. - Write the opening paragraph of a creative story, focusing on character and setting. - Create a cliffhanger in order to hook the reader. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does Marinka wish for as she cleans the house? What does she realise? (page 279) 2. How does Marinka <u>take responsibility</u> on page 283? Who or what does she take responsibility for? 3. Why does Marinka feel better on page 290? How does she release her burden when she speaks to the house? (pages 288–290) 4. Why do you think Benjamin blushes when he speaks to Marinka about Benji? (page 294) 5. How does Marinka show her bravery when she leaves Jack with Benjamin? Why is she forced to 'blink back tears'? How is Marinka brave throughout the story? (page 298) 6. Marinka's experience of going through The Gate is different to what she expected. How? (pages 301–304) 7. What 'truth' does Marinka come to terms with as she cries out for Baba? (page 308) 8. How does the author show the true definition of <u>friendship</u> in this section? (pages 299–314) 9. At the end of the story, Marinka receives everything that she wished for. Do you agree with this statement? 10. What is the importance of the final image of the book? Why does the Old Yaga want Marinka to see 'the whole universe in the tiny puddle'? (page 337) 	<p>On pages 295–296, Marinka gives Benjamin a summary of her journey since she left him. Draw a <u>Plot Diagram</u> of <i>The House With Chicken Legs</i>, incorporating some of the events that Marinka mentions. Can you sort the action into a <u>beginning</u>, a <u>middle</u>, and an <u>end</u>?</p> <p>In the Q&A with the author Sophie Anderson at the end of the story, she explains that <i>The House With Chicken Legs</i> is inspired by the magic of <u>fairy tales</u>. Choose your favourite fairy tale and consider how you might change or challenge it. Draw a blank Plot Diagram and fill it in with your own ideas for the beginning, middle and end of your story.</p> <p>Write the opening paragraph of your own modern fairy tale. Use the beginning of <i>The House With Chicken Legs</i> as inspiration, focusing on a key character and setting. How will you create a cliffhanger or hook the reader?</p>

